

helps small charities learn how to access Federal grants to further their work.

Some might suggest America's problems are much bigger than what the CARE Act can handle, that they demand larger and grander solutions. But I respond that America's problems—problems like malnourishment, illiteracy, domestic violence, broken families, teen pregnancies—are problems that are too big for Government to fix. Some problems are so large that all the money in the world simply will not fix them. So many of these problems are rooted in the soul and Government cannot fix problems of the soul. But people can. And God can.

This bill empowers people, real people rooted in their communities, rooted in their churches, rooted in their synagogues, rooted in their mosques, to help, to reach out to their neighbors. And that kind of help is the type of help that changes hearts.

It is hard to feel loved when you are getting a handout from a government bureaucrat. But receiving a cold cup of water from a volunteer touches your heart, it changes you, and it changes the person giving that help, as well. For years I have had the wonderful opportunity, indeed the real privilege, of being able to travel to Africa to conduct and participate in medical missions. When I go to Africa, I don't go as a Senator. I go there as a physician, as a person of faith, as a neighbor, as a friend, as a person who cares about others throughout the world. Those trips have changed me as much, I promise, as they have changed any of the people I have helped.

My hope, today, is that we help invigorate what Edmund Burke called those "little platoons," those private associations that help us love our country, our fellow human beings. We need to strengthen the quiet but profound work of the little platoons of nonprofit agencies, of groups like the Neighborhood Learning Center, the Church of the Brethren Soup Kitchen, or the Room in the Inn. And when we strengthen them, we strengthen America.

Will the CARE Act cure all our problems? No. Sadly, no, of course not. But it will help us to help ourselves help others. Let's get this good bill moving to the President's desk. It will form a strong part of his faith-based initiative. I know the House is committed to moving quickly on a companion bill. I hope we can continue to work together across party lines to empower America's charities and to empower people throughout the country.

I yield the floor.

#### CARE ACT OF 2003

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 476, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The bill (S. 476) to provide incentives for charitable contributions by individuals and

businesses, to improve the public disclosure of activities of exempt organizations, and to enhance the ability of low-income Americans to gain financial security by building assets, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Grassley/Baucus Amendment No. 526, to provide a manager's amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order there will now be 30 minutes equally divided for general debate.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, the amendment by Senator NICKLES is in order, is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Senator NICKLES will offer his amendment in just a minute. He asked if I would do my speaking on that amendment at this point. I am very happy to do that.

I appreciate my friend's continued efforts to reform and reduce long term capital gain tax on real estate. And Senator NICKLES is correct—by excluding 25 percent of the capital gain on the sale of property we reduce the effective capital gain rate on sales for conservation purposes.

However, that is not the purpose of the provision. We intend to preserve precious, environmentally sensitive land from ever being developed. I need not remind my fellow Senators that they are not making any more land and if we do not preserve sensitive wetlands and open space from development it will be lost forever and all of our children and grandchildren will suffer from our lack of responsibility.

Senator NICKLES' amendment would literally make it easier to develop the very land we are attempting to preserve. That is certainly not the intent of this provision. I will be voting no and I strongly urge my fellow Senators to also vote no on Senator NICKLES' amendment.

I would like to take a few minutes to review the long history of this important provision. As you all know, the President's budget has included this proposal. In all of his budgets, in fact, the President actually continues to propose the exclusion of 50 percent of the capital gain for the sale of property for conservation purposes. So by comparison, this 25 percent proposal is modest, but still addresses the President's priorities.

In addition, the Senate Finance Committee has a long history of building support. In both the 106th and 107th Congresses, we held hearings specifically discussing this proposal. We had witnesses from the forests of Maine to the wetlands of Louisiana and the ranches of Arizona. Besides, this effort brings about bipartisan support for the issue.

Not only have we heard huge support for this provision from all the traditional conservation organizations, like the Nature Conservancy and the Land Trusts and Iowa's own Heritage Foundation, but I know both I and Senator BAUCUS continue to receive very vocal

support from the farmers and ranchers who populate our States. Both the Farm Bureau and the Cattleman's Association have let us know that this gives our citizens choices to stay on the land and yet preserve the open space.

The opportunity to give an easement, preserve our farm and ranch lifestyles and give up the right to ever develop the land is important public policy and I urge my fellow Senators to vote no on Senator NICKLES' amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I think it is important at the outset to know we are including in the CARE bill incentives to help provide charitable contributions for good voluntary purposes, and I think this bill should continue to honor that thrust. The amendment before us does not. The amendment before us essentially is a capital gains tax amendment and applies generally to all property that would be sold. I think this is not the place for that kind of amendment.

The underlying provisions of the bill provide that taxpayers who voluntarily sell land to a qualified conservation organization can exclude 25 percent of the gain on that sale from capital gains tax. The purpose, obviously, is to help people, most of whom are land rich and cash poor and do not have much income from their ranching or farm operations—to help by transferring the property to a conservation organization.

There are many organizations in this country—a lot in my State of Montana—such as the Nature Conservancy, lots of very good, solid organizations which take land and save it for conservation purposes. This is very important because our country is losing a lot of land to development each day, each year. In fact, in the United States about 2 acres of farmland per minute, or about 1 million per year, are lost to development; that is, shopping centers and new homes or what-not that are just taking away some of the natural land that we have in our country and converting it at a very rapid rate to shopping centers and developments.

That is part of America. We need to build shopping centers. We need to also build new homes, housing tracts, and so forth. But we also need to remember there are other values in our country, and those are protecting open space and protecting farms and ranches. A lot of our farms and ranches are under great stress. I know the Presiding Officer knows that is true in her home State as is the case in every State.

We are trying to figure out a balanced way to help those farmers and ranchers donate a portion of their land to a conservation organization. They cannot do that today because they have no income. Because they have no income, they can't take the usual charitable deduction. To help them, we are saying you don't have to worry about the charitable deduction; you can still